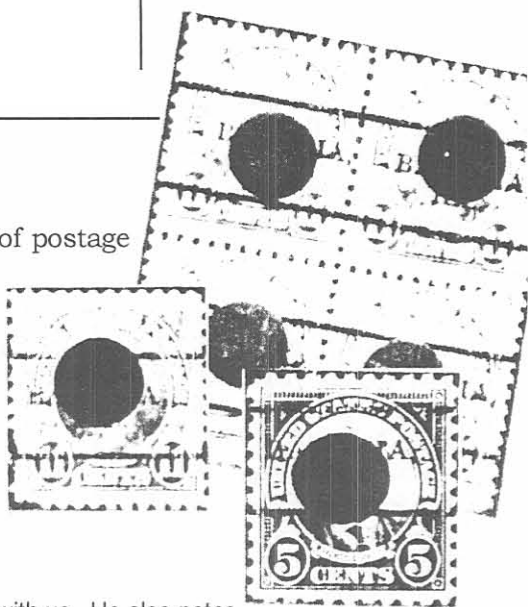

The Batavia postage due punched precancels

In the mid 1920s, the Batavia, Illinois, post office found itself short of postage dues and with a business with a lot of return mail which required their use. In desperation—and with inspiration—the post office punch cancelled sheets of 11¢ 1922 and 5¢ 1923 regular issue stamps which had already been precancelled with the L-2 precancel typeset.

Most of the surviving copies are in blocks of four, suggesting that they were used on forms rather than on envelopes. No examples have been seen on paper, but there are several references to the event in literature.

The “perfin” hole is 11mm in diameter, somewhat in excess of that allowable on regular perfins.



Editor's note: We appreciate Dave Smith sharing his knowledge of perfinned precancels with us. He also notes that he has seen postage due stamps with the State of Michigan perfin and with straight line crayon cancels, suggesting a possible silent precancel/perfin use. The examples he has seen are on the 1917 issue dues. Has anyone seen these on cover? If you can provide more information, please contact the editor or write to David W. Smith at 125 West 6th Street, Rochester, IN 46975.